

Message Text

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SUBJ: ANALYSIS OF US-USSR TREATMENT BY BELGRADE PRESS

1. SUMMARY: AN INFORMAL STUDY OF THREE MONTHS OF POLITIKA AND BORBA COVERAGE SHOWS THAT WHILE THE U.S. GETS MORE ATTENTION THAN THE U.S.S.R. IN THE LEADING BELGRADE PAPERS, THAT HARDLY RESULTS IN A PUBLIC RELATIONS COUP.

2. WHILE WE HAVE LONG BELIEVED THAT THE U.S. GETS ROUGHER TREATMENT IN THE BELGRADE PRESS THAN DOES THE SOVIET UNION, WE HAVE NOT HAD ANY STANDARD BY WHICH TO MEASURE THAT TREATMENT. THE POST RECENTLY UNDERTOOK A REVIEW OF THE JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH DAILY ISSUES OF POLITIKA AND BORBA IN WHICH EVERY SUBSTANTIVE ARTICLE TOUCHING ON EITHER COUNTRY WAS NOTED.

3. ONE BIT OF OBJECTIVE DATA WHICH RESULTED WAS THAT SUBSTANTIVE STORIES ABOUT THE UNITED STATES APPEAR IN THE BELGRADE PRESS THREE TIMES AS OFTEN AS DO STORIES ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION (POLITIKA 97-36, BORBA 56-17). THAT IS, HOWEVER, NOT A FAVORABLE FIGURE IN VIEW OF THE CONTENTS.

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4. THE CORPORATE BRIBERY SCANDALS PROVIDED MUCH

OF THE GRIST FOR THE MILLS ON U.S. AFFAIRS. AT THE SAME TIME THE MOST NEWSWORTHY ITEM REGARDING THE SOVIET UNION WAS THE 25TH CPSU CONGRESS. AMERICAN MERCENARIES IN ANGOLA, CIA FUNDING OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES, VETOES OF PRO-PLO RESOLUTIONS IN THE UN, AND TERRORISM DIRECTED AGAINST YUGOSLAV REPRESENTATIVES IN THE U.S. ADDED FURTHER TO THE IMBALANCE IN AMERICA'S DISFAVOR.

5. OBVIOUSLY, THE AMERICAN PENCHANT FOR SELF-CRITICISM AND THE FLAIR WITH WHICH OUR NEWS MEDIA EXPOSE OUR SHORTCOMINGS PROVIDE CRITICS WITH PLENTY OF COPY. THE SAME CAN NOT BE SAID FOR THE SOVIETS. ABOUT A THIRD OF THE ARTICLES ON AMERICA ARE NEWSWIRE PIECES, BUT THE SIGNIFICANT CRITICS ARE THE U.S. BASED CORRESPONDENTS WHO GENERATE ALMOST DAILY "NEWS ANALYSIS" STYLE REPORTING.

6. THE CHOICE OF WORDS USED IN CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES SEEMS HARSHER THAN THAT USED AGAINST THE SOVIETS; IN FACT, ARTICLES ON THE SOVIET UNION TEND TO AVOID DIRECT COMMENTS IN FAVOR OF USING QUOTES BY FOREIGN CRITICS, ALLUSIONS TO HISTORICAL EVENTS, AND EMPHASIS ON CURRENT EVENTS CONSIDERED UNFAVORABLE TO THE SOVIET UNION. EXEMPLARY OF THE LAST OF THESE WAS THE TEMPEST OVER WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTY RENUNCIATIONS OF "PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM" DOCTRINE.

7. IN MANY WAYS, SUCH A RESULT IS PREDICTABLE.

8. THE YUGOSLAVS ARE PROFESSED COMMUNISTS AND ARE BOUND TO BE MORE CRITICAL OF THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE THAN OF THE SOVIET. THE IMBALANCE IN QUANTITY OF COVERAGE REFLECTS THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES IS SEEN AS BEING ON THE "WRONG" SIDE OF MORE SPECIFIC ISSUES (PANAMA, VIETNAM, KOREA, SOUTHERN AFRICA) THAN THE SOVIETS. NEVERTHELESS, THE DOGMATIC, CRITICAL TONE OF THE BELGRADE PRESS BELIES SPECIOUS YUGOSLAV CLAIMS TO EVENHANDEDNESS

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IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE SUPER POWERS. WE SHOULD NEVER AGAIN LET THEM CLAIM THAT THE U.S. PRESS IS ONE-SIDEDLY AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA WITHOUT POINTING OUT THAT IN A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF THREE MONTHS OF THEIR PRESS NOT A SINGLE ARTICLE CLEARLY FAVORABLE TO U.S. APPEARED. CATHERMAN

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